

Chapter 1

Setting Up Shop

In This Chapter

- ▶ Installing Quicken
 - ▶ Touring Quicken
 - ▶ Setting up your bank (or other) accounts if you're a first-time user
 - ▶ Retrieving existing Quicken data files
-

If you've never used Quicken, begin here. This chapter tells you how to install Quicken (if you haven't already) and how to start the program for the first time. You also find out how you go about setting up Quicken accounts to track banking activities — specifically, the money that goes into and out of a checking or savings account.

If you've already begun to use Quicken, don't waste any time reading this chapter unless you want the review. You already know the stuff it covers.

By the way, if you have Windows, I assume that you know a little bit about it. No, you don't have to be some sort of expert. Shoot, you don't even have to be all that proficient. You do need to know how to start Windows applications (such as Quicken). It also helps immensely if you know how to choose commands from menus and how to enter stuff into windows and dialog boxes. If you don't know how to do these kinds of things, flip to Appendix A. It provides a quick-and-dirty overview of how you work in Windows. Read the stuff in the appendix, or at least skim it, and then come back to this chapter.



When I say Windows, I mean a recent version of Windows — something Microsoft is either currently selling or has sold in the last few years. Quicken 2008 won't run on Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, so if you want to run the latest version, I'm afraid it's time to upgrade. By the way, for the computer I used to write this book, I used Windows Vista.

Installing and Starting Quicken

You install Quicken the same way that you install any program in Windows. If you already know how to install programs, you don't need any help from me. Stop reading here, do the installation thing, start your newly installed Quicken program, and then start reading the next section, "Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before."

If you need help installing Quicken, here are the step-by-step instructions. Installing Quicken from a CD-ROM is as easy as one, two, three, four:

1. Insert the CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive.

In a short amount of time, Quicken should display the Quicken 2008 installation window. I'm not going to show this window in a figure. There's really nothing on the window to talk about. The window just reads Welcome.

Note: If nothing happens when you put the CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive, don't panic! First, try removing the CD and then putting it in again. If Windows still doesn't recognize the CD, you need to *tell* Windows that it should install your Quicken program. In many versions of Windows (but not necessarily with your version), you do this with the Windows Control Panel by using the Programs tool. To do this, refer to your Windows user guide or a good book about your version of Windows (such as *Windows Vista For Dummies*, written by Andy Rathbone; Wiley).

2. Click Next.

Quicken then displays a window that asks you a few questions:

- The first question is whether you accept the Quicken license agreement.
- The next question asks where you want to install Quicken. You should accept the installation's program suggestion. (The installation program suggests a Quicken subfolder in your Program Files folder.)
- The next question — an implicit question really — asks whether it's okay to uninstall the previous version of Quicken if there is a previous version of Quicken installed on your computer. You may also be asked whether it's okay with you if it gets any program updates.

3. Answer these questions by clicking the appropriate buttons. Click Next to move to the next question. Then click the Install Now button when you answer the last question.

Quicken installs itself. This process takes a few minutes. Along the way, you see several other screenfuls of messages, including marketing information about the features new to Quicken and some progress reports on the installation itself.



When in doubt about some installation option, just accept the default suggestion by pressing Enter.

After the installation is complete, Quicken displays an installation complete message.

4. Click Done.

Congratulations. You're done.

After you install Quicken, you need to start it to finish the setup process. If you told the installation program to launch Quicken 2008, you should see the Quicken program window on your screen. If you didn't tell the installation program to launch Quicken, you need to start Quicken.



The easiest way to start Quicken is to double-click the Quicken shortcut icon that (post-installation) appears on your Windows desktop. The Quicken program window appears, almost like magic.

Quicken might ask whether it can download program updates over the Internet. You can just say yes if it asks you this question.

Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before

If you've used a previous version of Quicken, the Quicken program might show option buttons to indicate what you want to do next: Open the found data file. (Alternatively, you can indicate that you want to open some other data file.) You're done. You're ready to begin Quicken-ing.



The Quicken setup process can usually tell whether you've used Quicken before. The setup process knows where the Quicken installation program usually puts the Quicken program and data files, and the installation program will look there. If you have used Quicken before but Quicken can't see this, two possibilities exist: The first possibility is that you put the Quicken data file someplace weird. (If that's the case, hopefully, you remember the weird place you hid the Quicken data file. If you can't remember, choose File⇨ Find Quicken Data File, select the disk you want to search from the Look In box, and click Find. Quicken displays a list of the Quicken data files on the selected disk. For more help with this, see the section, "The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files," at the end of this chapter.) The second possibility is that you didn't do anything with the Quicken data file but that the data file has somehow gone missing. (If that's the case, hopefully you backed up the Quicken data file to a CD or to some other disk from which you can restore the data file.)

Finishing Setup If You Haven't Used Quicken Before

If Quicken can't figure out whether you've used the Quicken program before, it displays the welcome message shown in Figure 1-1.



Figure 1-1:
The Get
Started
With
Quicken
2008
window.

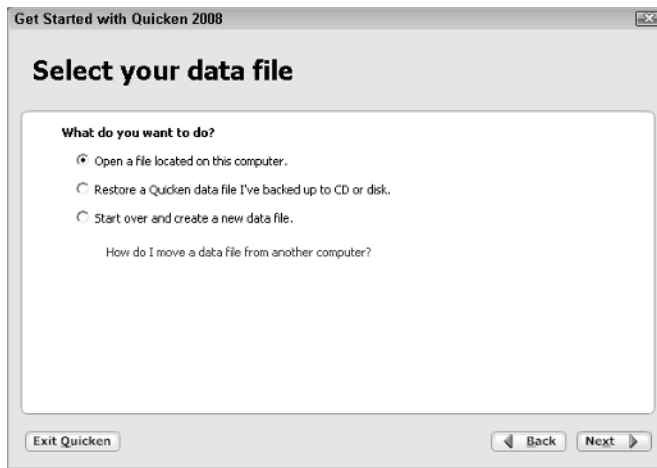
If you have used Quicken before, select the I Am Already A Quicken User option. Quicken then displays another Get Started With Quicken 2008 window that asks whether you want to open a Quicken file located on this computer, restore a Quicken data file you've backed up to CD or disk, or start over and create a new data file, as shown in Figure 1-2.

If you indicate that you want to open another Quicken data file located on the computer, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. If you indicate that you want to grab a backup copy of the Quicken file, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. Presumably, if either of these situations is your case, you'll know where the data file or backup copy of the data file is.



At the very end of this chapter in the section, "The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files," I describe how you can locate and open a Quicken data file.

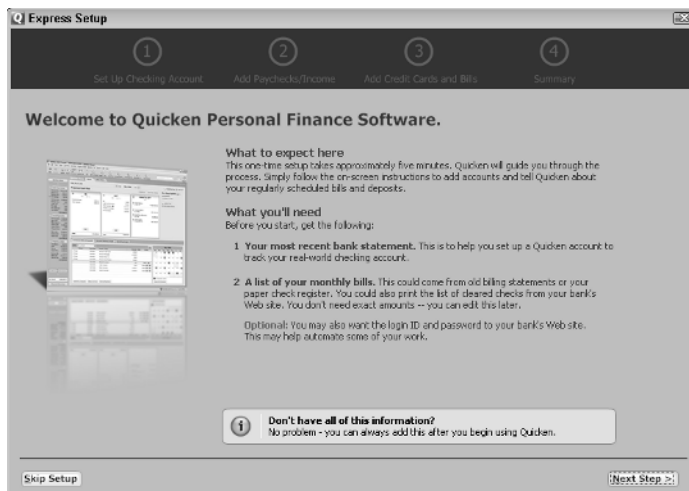
Figure 1-2:
Another Get
Started
With
Quicken
2008
window.



If you haven't used Quicken before, Quicken asks whether it's okay to use the default location for the data file (you should agree to this), and then it automatically sets up a data file for you (you don't need to worry about it). Quicken next prompts you to register. (You might as well do this. The registration takes only a few minutes. All you do, in a nutshell, is provide your name and address, a bit of information about how you use Quicken, and your e-mail address.)

After the data file is set up, Quicken starts the Express Setup (see Figure 1-3). The Express Setup process walks you through the steps for setting up Quicken. (You can find out much more on this process in the next section.)

Figure 1-3:
The Quicken
Express
Setup
window.



Running the Quicken Express Setup

Okay. Here's the deal. The Quicken Express Setup walks you through a four-step process that asks for some personal information, about your banking, about your income, and about your regular bills. (You walk through the steps by clicking the Next Step button in the lower-right corner of the window.)

Sharing the details of your private life

The “collection of personal information” step asks for your name and, if you're married, for your spouse's name. This first step also asks which book-keeping activities you plan to use Quicken for: personal, small business, rental property, and so on.

Don't stress about this stuff. Just answer the questions as best you can. If you don't know how to answer some question, don't worry about it. Go ahead and skip the question.

Describing your banking

The second, “describe your banking” step asks you to provide information about your bank account and its current balance. Figure 1-4 shows the window that collects the first part of this information, but just so you don't get confused, here are the precise steps you take:

Figure 1-4:
The Set Up
Your
Primary
Checking
Account
window.

The screenshot shows the 'Express Setup' window with four steps: 1. Set Up Checking Account, 2. Add Paychecks/Income, 3. Add Credit Cards and Bills, and 4. Summary. Step 1 is active. The main heading is 'Set up your primary checking account'. Below it, there are two sections: 'What is the primary bank account you use to:' with radio buttons for 'Pay bills' and 'Deposit your paycheck'; and 'This account is held at the following institution:' with a text box and two radio buttons: 'Why does Quicken want to know my bank?' and 'What if my bank isn't listed?'. At the bottom, there is a question mark icon, an 'Exit Setup' button, and a 'Next Step >>' button.

1. **Identify the financial institution — usually a bank — by typing your institution's name into the text box provided.**

As you type, Quicken displays a list of financial institutions that match what you've typed so far. The more you type, the shorter the list of possible matching institutions. If you see your bank or whatever listed, select it. When you click the Next Step button, Quicken displays the next Quicken Express Setup window, as shown in Figure 1-5.

Figure 1-5:
The Get
Your Current
Balance
And
Account
Activity
Directly
From Your
Bank
window.

Q Express Setup

1 Set Up Checking Account 2 Add Paychecks/Transfers 3 Add Credit Cards and Bills 4 Summary

Get your current balance and account activity directly from your bank

Connect to U.S. Bank - PPM Direct Connect directly through Quicken with One Step Update.

☒ Yes, I want to connect to U.S. Bank - PPM Direct Connect through Quicken. I have my User name and Password.

☐ What if I don't know?

☐ No, I do not want to connect to U.S. Bank - PPM Direct Connect through Quicken.

Find your most recent account statement, and enter the statement ending date and balance:

Name your account:

Statement ending date:

Balance on the ending date: \$

i Don't have all of your account information handy? No problem - just click **Next Step**. You can enter your account balance later.

2. **Tell Quicken whether you want to use the online setup for your account or manually set up your account.**

I'm going to suggest, because you're just starting out, that you set up your account manually. You have plenty of time later to find out how online banking works. (Online banking is really cool, though. See Chapter 6 for more information.) To indicate that you'll manually set up your account, select the No radio button. Note that Quicken may not get into this online banking stuff if Quicken can tell that your bank doesn't support online banking.

3. **Tell Quicken the name you want to use for the checking account.**

You do so by typing a name in the Name Your Account text box, as shown in Figure 1-5. By the way, you can be as general or as specific as you want. But remember, brevity is a virtue; be as concise as you can. The reason is that Quicken uses your account name to label stuff within the Quicken window and on Quicken reports. If you use a long account name, the name may not always fit on reports and screens.

4. Enter the ending bank statement date by referring to your bank statement.

When Quicken asks for the ending statement date, enter the date of your last bank statement. This date, by the way, is when you will start using Quicken. Enter the date in *MM/DD/YYYY* fashion.

“Geez, Steve,” you’re now saying to yourself, “what’s *MM/DD/YYYY* fashion?” Okay. Here’s an example: If your bank statement is dated July 13, 2008, type **07/13/2008**, or you can type **072308**.

5. Enter the ending bank statement balance by referring to your bank statement.

This balance is whatever appears on your bank statement. This balance is also the amount of money in your account on the date you begin your financial record keeping. If you have \$4.16 in your checking account, type **4.16** into the Balance On The Ending Date text box.

6. After you type the bank statement balance, click the Next Step button to continue moving through the Express Setup.

Describing your income

The third step in the Express Setup? Describing any regular income that you receive (such as a paycheck) and any regular deposits you make into your bank account (see Figure 1-6). To provide this information, you *could* enter the name of the payor into the Company Name text box. You *could* describe the type of payment by using the Category box, and you *could even* give the amount of the regular payment by using the Take-Home Pay box.

Express Setup

1 Set Up Checking Account **2 Add Paychecks/Income** 3 Add Credit Cards and Bills 4 Summary

Add my deposits and other income

Add each paycheck and other regular source of income that you want to track in Quicken. If the amount varies from month to month, just enter a monthly average. You can specify the actual amount each time you enter the paycheck in Quicken.

[Why should I track this?](#)

* Required fields

Company Name*	Category	Take-Home Pay	How Often?	Next Pay Date	Enter into this Account?
	Salary	0.00	Every two weeks	7/13/2007	checking

[Add Row](#)

1 Want to track details such as paycheck deductions? You can add more paycheck information later.

1 Not ready to add this information? No problem—just click **Next Step**. You can enter this later.

[Exit Setup](#) [Next Step >>](#)

Figure 1-6:
The Add My
Deposits
And Other
Income
window.

But you know what? You can also just skip this “add my deposits and other income” step if you’re lazy (like me) or if you don’t actually have a regular source of income (also like me).

In fact, I’m going to recommend you skip this step. Seriously.

Describing your outgo

The fourth step in the Express Setup requires you to describe your regular bills and expenses — things such as the rent or your mortgage, cell phone charges, and your ever-increasing cable TV bill (see Figure 1-7). To provide this expense information, you *could* (again, if you’re really anal) enter the name of the company you’re paying into the Name text box and the payment amount into the Average Payment box or the Average Amount box. But you know what? Good grief! This setup stuff is getting way too complicated for me. Just skip this step, too. You can deal with it later. (No reason to make this more complicated than you have to.)

Express Setup

1 Set Up Checking Account 2 Add Paychecks/Income **3 Add Credit Cards and Bills** 4 Summary

Add regular bills and expenses
Identify all your expenses that occur on a regular basis to help forecast your account inflows and outflows.
Why should I track this?
* Required fields

My Credit Cards

Name*	Average Payment	Next Due Date	Enter into this Account?
	0.00	7/13/2007	Checking

Add Row Total Credit Card Payments: **\$0.00**

My Bill Reminders

Name*	Category	Average Amount	Next Due Date	Enter into this Account?
		0.00	7/13/2007	Checking

Add Row Total Expenses: **\$0.00**

Want to setup Quicken to do online bill pay?
Don't worry - you can do that later.

Exit Setup < Previous Step Next Step >

Figure 1-7:
The Add
Regular
Bills And
Expenses
window.

You’ll need to click the Next Step button a couple more times, click Finish, and then — *voilà!* — Quicken displays the Quicken Home window (see Figure 1-8).



The best way to get started

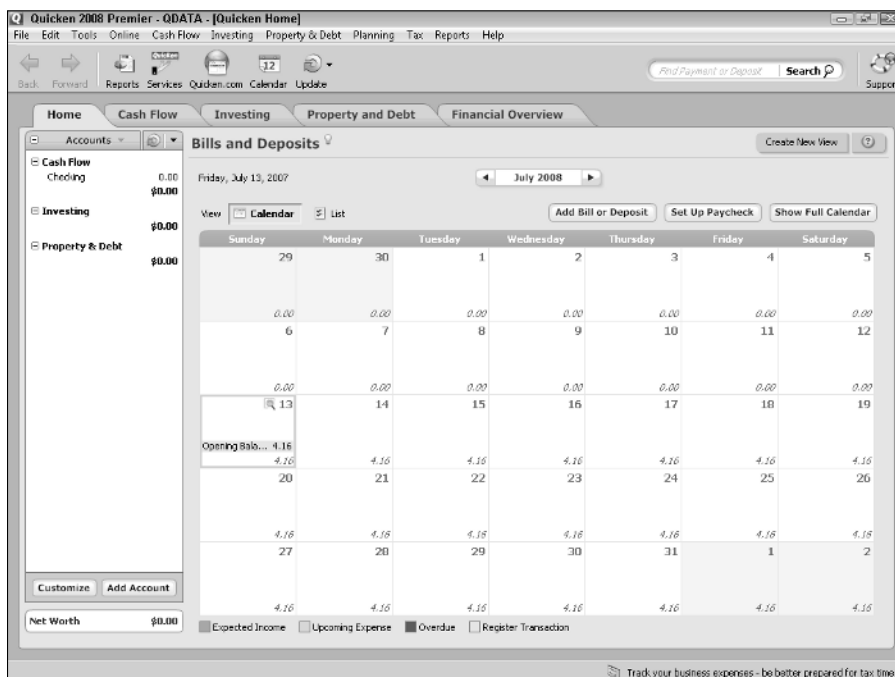
Quicken wants you to use your last bank statement to set up the bank account you track. This way, your financial records synchronize with the bank's records when you start using Quicken.

But I want to suggest something slightly different to you. Go back further than just to the beginning of the previous month (which is what you do when you use your last bank statement). Go back to the beginning of the year and use the last bank statement of the previous year — even if it's now several months after the beginning of the year. Now, I'm not trying to waste your time. Let me point out two big advantages

to having a complete year's data in Quicken: Tracking and tallying your tax deductions will be a snap, and planning your finances will be easier. When you enter the activity, be sure to enter any outstanding checks or deposits from the prior period with their correct dates also. That way, they are there to check off when you do your first reconciliation.

Going back to the beginning of the year isn't as hard as you may think. Quicken provides a bunch of tools to help you enter several months' worth of data in a very short time, as you can see in this chapter and in the two or three that follow.

Figure 1-8:
The Quicken
Home
window.





Now I need to explain something here. The Quicken Express Setup assumes that you're going to set up almost everything you need or will ever need in Quicken all at once and in the beginning. You can do that if you want, but that's not my suggestion (er, obviously). I say, heck, keep it simple. You can easily add stuff later, when you want it. Sound okay? (I do explain how to set up this stuff in other chapters.)

My reasoning for this suggestion is that I'd like you to have some experience working with Quicken before you go hog-wild. Focus first on those personal accounting tasks that you absolutely will want to perform. This approach gets you started working with Quicken — happily, productively, and successfully — from day one. If you want to do more in a week or a month or a year, great. You can easily do more tasks, and by then, you'll know so much more about Quicken that adding these other tasks will be a snap.

Steve's Overview

You don't need to know much about the mechanics of the Quicken *interface* — the way its windows work — to begin working with Quicken, especially in any chapters in this book in which I cover the basics. I provide plenty of detailed instructions, but I have a couple of quick comments now.

Starting Quicken for the second time

The second time you start Quicken — and every subsequent time — things work pretty much the same way as the first time. Double-click the Quicken icon on your desktop. Or, if you like doing things the hard way, click Start and then choose All Programs⇨Quicken 2008⇨Quicken 2008.

Using Quicken document windows

Quicken doesn't use document windows the way that some other Windows applications do. Quicken basically turns document windows into pages that you leaf through by clicking the window buttons that appear in an Account Bar along the left edge of the program window. In Figure 1-8, for example, you see buttons for Cash Flow center, Investing center, and Property & Debt center. Go ahead and turn to that page. I'll just wait here for you until you get back.

Navigating with QuickTabs

Quicken arranges all its features — whistles, bells, or whatever else you want to call them — using navigation QuickTabs that appear near the top edge of the window. For example, if you look closely at Figure 1-8, you will see a Home tab, a Cash Flow tab, an Investing tab, a Property & Debt tab, and a Financial Overview tab.

If you're still confused, click the buttons and bits of text in the area of the Quicken window that I'm talking about. You'll clearly see how things work.

Solving Tricky Setup Problems

I want to quickly go over a handful of annoying setup problems new Quicken users may encounter. If you have Quicken set up and are ready to roll, skip this stuff.

Did somebody say Macintosh?

You can use the existing old Quicken files if you're working with a new version of Quicken. In fact, if the Quicken installation program can find a version of old Quicken files on your computer, it gives you the option of just skipping all the Quicken Express Setup stuff. In this case, you just begin using your existing files. (I mention this point earlier in this chapter, in fact.)

If you've been using Quicken for Macintosh, however, you have to export your data from the Macintosh before you can read it in the Windows version. And I can think of about a million things more fun to do than exporting Quicken data from a Mac to Windows. See the section in Chapter 17 on importing data from an old accounting system for a brief discussion on the procedure and some suggestions for better ways to spend your time.

The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files

If Quicken doesn't find the old files, you need to open the specific files. But if you have this problem, you should be able to solve it yourself. What has happened, if you find yourself in this boat, is that you've moved or messed around with the Quicken files with some other program, such as Windows. If you did that, presumably you had a reason. And more to the point, you should know where you put the files.

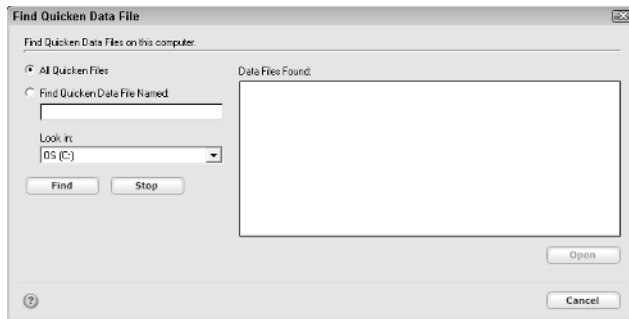
Using the File⇨Find Quicken Files command

You can use File⇨Find Quicken Files to select and open your existing Quicken files. Here's how:

1. **Choose File⇨Find Quicken Files from the menu bar by using your mouse.**

Figure 1-9 shows the Find Quicken Data File dialog box that appears after you choose the command. Quicken uses this dialog box to collect the information it will need to find your lost Quicken data.

Figure 1-9:
The Find
Quicken
Data File
dialog box.



2. **Tell Quicken on which disk the data file is probably stored.**

Select the disk you want Quicken to search from the Look In list box. Note that you can click the down arrow to the right of the Look In list box to display a list of your computer's disks.

From the list of drives and folders that appears, click the one that stores your Quicken files. Quicken closes the drop-down list box and displays your selection in the list box beneath the Look In box.

3. **Click Find to search the disk.**

Quicken searches the specified disk for Quicken data files. As Quicken finds Quicken data files, it adds them to the Data Files Found list box.

4. **Select the correct file from the list box.**

After Quicken finds the Quicken data files stored on the specified disk, select the Quicken data file you know you want.

5. **Click Open after you select the file.**

Quicken opens the file and displays the active account in the register window. (Quicken also displays its Reminders window to show any unprinted checks or scheduled transactions.)

Note: If the file you're opening was created in a previous version of Quicken, Quicken converts the data to the Quicken 2008 format.

Note: If Quicken displays the Quicken Home window rather than the account register, click the bank account name hyperlink beneath the Cash Flow center button.

Migrating from Microsoft Money

Suppose that you're moving from Microsoft Money to Quicken. The question of the hour is this: Can you reuse your old or existing Money files in Quicken? The answer is, "Yes, sort of."

You can download a program called Data Converter from the Quicken support Web site. Data Converter converts Microsoft Money data files from Microsoft Money 2003 and later versions to the Quicken 2004, 2005, 2006, or 2007 file format. Quicken 2008 should easily then convert one of these old-format Quicken files to the Quicken 2008 file format. So, theoretically, you can move Microsoft Money data files to Quicken.

Practically, however, moving financial information from Quicken to Money or vice versa doesn't seem to work all that well. Transactions seem to get lost. Account balances get messed up. People ruin their lives. Well, maybe that last comment is a slight exaggeration. But, no kidding: Migrating is problematic. If you do want to move from one program to another, I suggest making sure that you have a really good reason for doing so and that you allow yourself enough time to track down and correct any errors. The data converter is available from <http://custhelp.quicken.com> — use the search term Microsoft Money after you select your Quicken version.